

It's not up to States to patrol their borders, to protect who is here, and to enforce workplace laws; it is the responsibility of the Federal Government. The Federal Government has failed to enforce our immigration laws. It's time to act now to pass comprehensive immigration reform. I have heard the message from Arizona loud and clear, and I hope that that passage of that bill provides an impetus for us to take the politically challenging but critical steps necessary to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

Today was an exciting day for immigration reform. In the Senate, they introduced their conceptual proposal for immigration reform. This was introduced today by a number of Senators. Now, it's not a bill. We have a bill in the House that I proudly joined as a cosponsor of with about 100 Members to fix our broken immigration system. But this is the first step towards a bill in the Senate, which I hope will be introduced soon and will be bipartisan. It starts out 1(a), "securing the border first before any action can be taken to change the status of people in the United States illegally." As long as we have a porous border and we are failing to secure our border, there won't be any meaningful reform in our own country. There will continue to be people who enter our country extralegally.

It's absolutely ridiculous that in this day and age, a sovereign Nation, the greatest Nation on Earth, cannot secure our own border. It's also critical that we know who's here. The Senate plan and the House plan that I am a cosponsor of require our undocumented population to register and undergo a background check. That's an important step, because right now we don't even know who is here in our own country. That's a security threat that every American should take seriously, and I think it's critical that we know who's here.

Arizona has triggered a national crisis and underlined the critical need for action at the Federal level. This ridiculous measure that Arizona passed—and I should point out that we should expect, if Congress continues to fail to take action, other States to pass some misguided and extreme State laws. But this Arizona law has triggered a moral crisis by forcing American citizens, families who are American citizens, to live in fear.

What does this law mean? It means that as American citizens are going about their business, going to school, going to the 7-Eleven, whatever they're doing, and if an officer thinks, thinks, suspects that they might be an illegal immigrant—could it be the clothes they wear? Could it be their race? Could it be an accent they speak with?—that officer can then demand proof, proof of their legal status in the U.S.

Now, I ask you, who carries the proof of their American citizenship with them? I know I don't when I go out shopping. I know I don't when I go for

a walk. So these Americans will be detained. They could spend days, weeks, even months away from their families as they have to prove their American citizenship and request the documentation to do so. That can frequently take a long time, and I have been to these immigrant detention facilities. We have one in Aurora, Colorado. That is the type of facility that an American citizen will be taken to simply because they are not walking around or going about with the documentation of their American citizenship.

This threatens to turn Arizona into a police state. It threatens to strike fear in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Arizonans, particularly Arizonans of particular ethnic heritages. That's why I feel very strongly this bill is a racist bill, one born of xenophobia, but one that will affect the rights of American citizens. Will it lead to the apprehension of more undocumented immigrants? It might. It will, on the margins. But it will lead to the detention of American citizens accidentally because American citizens, as we go about our own business in our own country, should not have to carry with us proof of our citizenship in this great Nation.

Where does this overreach of government end? This new law has triggered a political crisis in Arizona, effectively causing the law enforcement community, which has strongly opposed this bill in Arizona, to face the choice of going after people based on their race or protecting people from crime.

The fastest growing segment of our electorate will continue to pay attention to this issue. Latinos want to know that we have an interest in fixing the broken immigration system and making sure that no other States overreach and go after American citizens like Arizona does.

And yet we can all understand—me from Colorado, others across the Nation—why Arizona felt it had to fail to them to take action on this issue. It's because the Federal Government has failed to act on comprehensive immigration reform. Immigration is a national issue that requires a national solution. It can't be solved on a State-by-State basis. We need the Federal Government to take bold and decisive action, and we need to pass comprehensive immigration reform now.

We stand with the Arizona Association of Police Chiefs, the Yuma County sheriff, Mesa police chief and other law enforcement officials who are opposed to Senate bill 1070 in Arizona because it makes Arizonan communities less safe and threatens American citizens with detention. If people are afraid that their families and neighbors and friends will be rounded up by police, they live in constant fear of a government and a police that are there to serve and protect.

The Arizona immigration enforcement law is an example of the chaos that's been created by the Federal Government's failure to protect our bor-

ders and act on comprehensive immigration reform. The new Arizona law is an attack on our American values. President Obama's acknowledged that Arizona's law undermines the basic notions of fairness that we cherish as Americans. This is a challenge of who we are as a Nation, who we are as human beings, and whether we're going to stand up for American ideals or reject those to appeal to our worst instincts and the worst among us.

Let's do the right thing and fix our broken immigration system. That is a challenge to us here in Congress, and it shouldn't take courage from Members of Congress to talk about, support, and pass immigration reform. Quite to the contrary, it should take courage to avoid passing immigration reform, because the American people overwhelmingly want immigration reform, and those Members of Congress who stand in the way of securing our borders and ensuring that only people can work legally risk not returning next year and having a different voice that demands the action of the United States Congress.

This is one of the few issues that has broad agreement among my constituents in Colorado. I have said this to a number of audiences. When we talked about health care, there were many of my constituents who supported health care reforms and many who opposed it. With regard to immigration, I have not found one constituent on the left or the right that believes that we are doing everything right with regard to immigration. It is broken. Conservatives agree it's broken. Liberals agree it's broken. Nobody believes our immigration system works perfectly.

We have an undocumented population of over 10 million people. We have thousands, hundreds of thousands of businesses across this country that violate the law every day. The rule of law across our great Nation has been challenged and undermined. But we in Congress—I hope that we in Congress have heard the cry from Arizona, the cry from the 49 other States, the cry from the American people demanding that we in Congress take action to fix our broken immigration system and may restore the rule of law to this great Nation.

I see I am joined by my friend from Minnesota, who I will yield to.

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Congressman KEITH ELLISON here from the State of Minnesota, and it is very timely that we are here to talk about immigration. The fact of the matter is that it is a symptom of the Congress' failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform that we get these draconian pieces of legislation such as were signed into law in Arizona on April 23, 2010, just a few days ago. If the United States Government would take hold of this immigration debate and pass comprehensive immigration reform, States would not have to resort